

on the COVER



An egret wades for fish in the shallow waters of the Everglades

Fleet technicians work to keep District vehicles running

Busy regional field station engineers help operate and manage the vast water management network

Environmental scientists conduct oyster monitoring and research on the Indian River Lagoon

Chemistry lab technicians analyze hundreds of water samples every week

Strong Financial Strategies Keep Us Fiscally Fit



“I feel confident that our tax dollars are being well spent on the programs and projects needed to protect and manage our water and land resources.”

— **KEVIN MCCARTY**
GOVERNING BOARD MEMBER

Like any successful organization, the South Florida Water Management District strives to ensure that its business and financial practices are as sound and up-to-date as the science and technology that underlies the resource management aspects of the agency. With his years of business experience and financial acumen, Governing Board member Kevin McCarty provides the leadership and guidance to strengthen an already solid financial framework.

As a financial professional who has worked extensively with both private companies and public-sector agencies, I was extremely gratified to see the extent of financial management principles and practices already in place at the South Florida Water Management District when I first came on board a year ago. I feel confident that our tax dollars are being well spent on the programs and projects needed to protect and manage our water and land resources.

There’s always room for improvements, however, and I am especially pleased with the

progress we have made to implement positive changes in the area of financial oversight. The District’s Chief Financial Officer, Paul Dumars, and his dedicated staff have instituted a number of policy, process and procedural enhancements that address the full realm of financial management and public accountability.

To provide for increased earnings potential, we have updated and revamped our investment policy. This gives us greater flexibility and broadens the types of investments we can make – more in-line with private sector investment philosophy, but still within the guidelines of “safe” investment criteria for public funds. We are already seeing the benefits of better performance and yields through this change in policy.

In other action, we took advantage of historic low interest rates to increase our financial flexibility through a number of different strategies, such as refinancing outstanding bonds to lower existing debt payments, expanding our capital lease program for major equipment purchases, and increasing the use of established lines of credit. Our banking services contract is also up for reconsideration this year, giving us the opportunity to reassess our commercial bank account needs so we can ensure that we are getting

the best possible service at the best possible price.

In addition to our in-house treasury-management expertise and existing financial advisor network, we are expanding our utilization of outside consultants to make sure our investment portfolio and financial strategies are diverse and creative, while adhering to the basics of safety, liquidity and yield. We also value the year-round review and recommendations provided by the members of our external Budget and Finance Advisory Commission.

At the Governing Board level, two of our standing committees specifically address finance-related issues. I serve as the Chair of our Land Resources and Regulatory Committee. This group provides policy-level direction and oversight of both the expenditure and revenue-generating sides of these two key program areas. At our March meeting, the Board voted to expand the role of our existing Audit Committee to include review of District financial strategies, policies and programs. I also serve as a member of this committee.

By continuing to strengthen our financial business practices, it allows us to be even more effective in how we invest, utilize and manage the public funds we are entrusted with. Our bottom line is to be as fiscally fit as possible!

U.S. Supreme Court Issues Opinion

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled March 23 in favor of the South Florida Water Management District in overturning a lower court’s decision that would have forced water managers across the country to change their operational procedures. The Court vacated the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals decision and is sending the case back to the lower court, where it will be heard by the end of the year.

“This is a great victory for Everglades restoration,” said District Governing Board Chair Nicolás Gutiérrez. “When the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals issued their opinion, they did so without the proper considerations and I am thrilled that the Supreme Court recognized their error.”



Gov. **Jeb Bush** (second from right) is joined by Governing Board Member **Irela Bagué**, Miami-Dade County Commissioners **Joe Martinez** and **Jose “Pepe” Diaz**, and Homeland Security/FEMA Under Secretary **Mike Brown** to officially mark completion of the C-4 Emergency Detention Basin, Phase 1.

Partners Deliver on Miami-Dade Flood Relief

C-4 Emergency Detention Basin Dedication

Gov. Jeb Bush joined South Florida Water Management District representatives, elected officials, and state and federal emergency managers in late January to herald completion of the C-4 Emergency Detention Basin, Phase 1. This 450-acre impoundment area provides relief to the historically flood-prone neighborhoods of Sweetwater, West Miami and Flagami.

“Protecting our communities from floods goes hand-in-hand with restoring America’s Everglades,” Gov. Bush said.

The C-4 Emergency Detention Basin project is one component of a series of coordinated and interrelated flood-control improvement projects in Miami-Dade County initiated in response to severe rain events in 1999 and 2000. Numerous local, regional, state and federal agencies are among the project partners working together to improve water drainage and provide flood relief to some of the most affected areas in the county.

During the ceremony, officials also broke ground on the second phase of the project, which will provide another 450 acres of water storage.

“Flood control will always be a fundamental priority for the District,” said District Executive Director Henry Dean. “We are committed to doing whatever we can to help local governments identify and implement drainage system improvements for the benefit of our communities.”

CHECK It Out!

District helps fund local projects

Partnering with local governments on water resource protection projects is a high priority for the Governing Board and staff. More than \$47 million is earmarked in this year’s budget to assist cities and counties with water



Left to right (front row): Rep. **Mike Davis**, Rep. **Dudley Goodlette**, District Governing Board member **Trudi Williams** and Naples Mayor **Bonnie MacKenzie**; (back row) Collier County Commissioners **Fred Halas**, **Jim Colleta**, **Donna Fiala** - Chair, **Fred Coyle** and **Tom Henning**.

resource enhancements, including funding for alternative water supply projects. Here are some examples of how that money is being put to work:

Checks in the amount of \$1.3 million were presented to Collier County legislators and elected officials in late January to help support projects designed to improve water quality and water flow to Naples Bay and the Big Cypress Basin watershed.

The city of Coral Gables was the recipient of a \$500,000 check to help dredge and restore the C-3 Canal/Gables Waterway in order to lessen the risk of community flooding.

Elsewhere around the District, checks were presented in Broward County to assist Cooper City with a new drainage system; in Highlands County to support Lake Istokpoga water quality monitoring; and in Miami-Dade County to help the City of Miami with dredging and sediment removal in Wagner Creek – a tributary to the Miami River.